"The American people have every right to oppose this government takeover of health care without being lumped in with bigots and vandals by liberals in Congress and in the mainstream press."

WASHINGTON, DC - U.S. Congressman Mike Pence delivered the following speech from the floor of the U.S. House condemning the bigotry, threats and acts of vandalism of criminals and also decrying the smearing of law-abiding citizens who oppose a government takeover of health care:

"The American people don't want a government takeover of health care. The policy, the backroom deals and the arrogance have angered millions.

"But that is no excuse for bigotry, threats or acts of vandalism and I condemn such things in the strongest possible terms. People who engage in such acts undermine our cause and should be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

"But I also rise to condemn the efforts to smear millions of law abiding Americans who oppose ObamaCare by associating them and their principled opposition with these criminal acts.

"The American people have every right to oppose this government takeover of health care without being lumped in with bigots and vandals by liberals in Congress and in the mainstream press.

"I say to my countrymen:

"End the threats.

"End the vandalism.

"And let's also end the smears of law-abiding citizens exercising their first amendment right to speech and peaceable assembly."